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Kaikoura Grass Karts Club celebrates its first anniversary with an awesome event **p5**

Grant helps Trust soar

By EMMA DANGERFIELD

The Government is to provide a grant of \$45,000 over three years to support the Huttons Shearwater Charitable Trust as part of a new direction by the Department of Conservation (DOC) to partner more with community organisations.

Conservation Minister Dr Nick Smith made the announcement in Kaikoura on Saturday afternoon, praising the efforts of the trust and the wider community in the work done thus far to protect the endemic species.

Kaikoura was one of only three places, including Northland and the subantarctic, which could claim a species of their own, he said, and it was vitally important those places recognised the importance of protecting them.

"We must ensure the survival of this endangered seabird that exists only in Kaikoura.

"These birds once numbered millions but they have been reduced to only a few colonies by pest predation and habitat loss," he said. "I commend the work of the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust since it was established in 2008."

The trust's initiatives in that time include constructing a predator-proof fence on the peninsula, trans-locating chicks into this safe-haven, researching migration patterns, and raising the profile of these birds, all of which was crucial to their survival, said Dr Smith.

"This is a small grant but is smart use of public money that will make a big difference to this community trust. It will enable the trust to employ a part-time coordinator and maintain this work to protect this iconic Kaikoura seabird.

"We need to protect the mountain scenery, ocean environment and special species that make Kaikoura such a successful destination. This grant is about the department and the Kaikoura

community working together to ensure Hutton's shearwater survives for the enjoyment of future generations."

Having visited Kaikoura as a child, he acknowledged the rejuvenation of a "pretty depressed town" had been down to nature, with Whale Watch leading the way. Kaikoura was a community revitalised by its nature tourism industry, he said. He also acknowledged the work of coastal guardian group Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura in the work they had done to this end.

"Nature has given to the community and it is now up to the community to give back to nature."

Representatives from DOC, Te Runanga o Kaikoura and the Huttons Shearwater Charitable Trust met with the minister on Saturday at Whale Watch Kaikoura to hear the announcement.

Speaking on behalf of the Runanga, Brett Cowan said he wanted to acknowledge the vision of Bill Solomon which inspired the establishment and growth of Whale Watch to what is it today. It was also through the vision of other ancestors that the land on the peninsula had been gifted for the man-made huttons colony, as Ngati Kuri had always had this restoration project in their sights, he said.

Huttons Charitable Trust spokesperson Jodie Denton thanked the Tukete Charitable Trust for allowing the use of the land, as well as recognising the important work of huttons trustee Geoff Harrow, who although he could not be at the announcement, was incredibly excited about seeing his dream become a reality.

Whale Watch Kaikoura offered help in terms of administrative support, she said, and she thanked the Runanga and Ngai Tahu for all their work over the years. The trust was also grateful to Nicky McArthur of Kaikoura Wilderness Walks, home to one of



Community collaboration: Conservation minister Dr Nick Smith, centre, with Runanga, DOC and Huttons Shearwater Charitable Trust representatives on Saturday. Dr Smith announced funding of \$45,000 will be going to the trust over the next three years. From left, Dave Hayes, DOC, Pete Clayton, Rangī Clayton, Tini Solomon, Aroha Boyd, Stuart Smith, National candidate for Kaikoura, Amelia Taylor, Darcia Solomon, front, Conservation Minister Nick Smith, behind, Jodie Denton, Nicky McArthur, Lynette Buurman, Elspeth Wingham, Phil Bradfield, DOC, and Teri Sonal.

Photo: EMMA DANGERFIELD

the three remaining colonies.

The funding announced on Saturday would now allow the trust to move from effectively an amateur organisation to a professional one, she said, and would allow the trust's work to spread further and further afield.

The Community Conservation Partnership Fund was announced in March this year and provides \$26 million over the next four years to community organisations undertaking natural heritage and recreation projects.

The fund will support hundreds of projects on public and private land and is particularly focused on helping the survival of the large number of New Zealand's threatened species like the Hutton's shearwater.

The huttons shearwater is an endangered seabird endemic to Kaikoura. The only place in the world that this species breeds is high in the Seaward Kaikoura Ranges at elevations between 1200 to 1800 metres.



More assistance: Kaikoura's special bird, the huttons shearwater, looks set to flourish with the announcement of Government funding for the Huttons Shearwater Charitable Trust.

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